



Panhandle News

BENEWAH, BONNER, BOUNDARY, KOOTENAI & SHOSHONE COUNTIES

ECONOMIC TRENDS

The Coeur d'Alene metropolitan area continues to grow although about half as fast as during the amazing expansion of 2004 and 2005. Between April 2006 and April 2007, nonfarm payroll jobs grew 3.2 percent. As Panhandle Table 1 shows, most major industrial sectors added jobs over that 12-month period. Lumber prices have been very low with the Random Lengths composite price for framing length under \$300 per thousand board feet since the end of September, and sawmills laid off about 70 workers. But other wood products manufacturers offset the sawmill job losses. Telecommunications lost about 80 jobs, pulling down the information sector, and U.S. Forest Service employment caused government to lose 20 jobs.

Construction may be falling in many areas nationwide, but it remains at 2006's record-shattering level in Kootenai County. Coeur d'Alene, Post Falls and Kootenai County issued 390 new home permits in the first quarter of 2007, up 15.4 percent from a year earlier. The value of permitted nonresidential and alteration projects rose from \$16.2 million in the first quarter of 2006 to \$70.4 million in the first quarter of 2007. Commercial projects in 2007 include the new federal building in Coeur d'Alene, the new Coeur d'Alene Library, the Kroc Center in Coeur d'Alene, the 125,000-square-foot Cabela's store and adjacent businesses in Post Falls, downtown revitalization in Hayden, the new Post Falls City Hall, a new elementary school in Post Falls, an expansion of Post Falls High School, a \$10.5 million office building called RiverView Tower in Coeur d'Alene, expansion of Wild Waters in Coeur d'Alene, construction of a 100,000-square-foot plant for Berg In-

Panhandle Table 1: Coeur d'Alene MSA Labor Force & Employment
Kootenai County

| | Apr 2007* | Mar 2007 | Apr 2006 | % Change From | |
|--|--------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| | | | | Last Month | Last Year |
| INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE | | | | | |
| <i>Seasonally Adjusted</i> | | | | | |
| Civilian Labor Force | 70,520 | 70,320 | 69,910 | 0.3 | 0.9 |
| Unemployed | 2,210 | 2,210 | 2,620 | 0.0 | -15.6 |
| % of Labor Force Unemployed | 3.1 | 3.1 | 3.7 | | |
| Total Employment | 68,310 | 68,110 | 67,290 | 0.3 | 1.5 |
| <i>Unadjusted</i> | | | | | |
| Civilian Labor Force | 69,540 | 68,950 | 69,290 | 0.9 | 0.4 |
| Unemployed | 2,450 | 3,030 | 2,870 | -19.1 | -14.6 |
| % of Labor Force Unemployed | 3.5 | 4.4 | 4.1 | | |
| Total Employment | 67,090 | 65,920 | 66,420 | 1.8 | 1.0 |
| JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK | | | | | |
| Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS | 56,070 | 54,450 | 54,330 | 3.0 | 3.2 |
| <i>Goods-Producing Industries</i> | 11,030 | 10,810 | 10,780 | 2.0 | 2.3 |
| Natural Resources & Mining | 410 | 430 | 360 | -4.7 | 13.9 |
| Construction | 5,880 | 5,640 | 5,810 | 4.3 | 1.2 |
| Manufacturing | 4,740 | 4,740 | 4,610 | 0.0 | 2.8 |
| Wood Product Manufacturing | 980 | 990 | 980 | -1.0 | 0.0 |
| Other Manufacturing | 3,760 | 3,750 | 3,630 | 0.3 | 3.6 |
| <i>Service-Providing Industries</i> | 45,040 | 43,640 | 43,550 | 3.2 | 3.4 |
| Trade, Transportation, & Utilities | 10,840 | 10,620 | 10,090 | 2.1 | 7.4 |
| Wholesale Trade | 1,570 | 1,560 | 1,460 | 0.6 | 7.5 |
| Retail Trade | 8,140 | 7,930 | 7,570 | 2.6 | 7.5 |
| Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities | 1,130 | 1,130 | 1,060 | 0.0 | 6.6 |
| Information | 930 | 950 | 1,010 | -2.1 | -7.9 |
| Financial Activities | 3,080 | 3,010 | 2,890 | 2.3 | 6.6 |
| Professional & Business Services | 6,300 | 6,090 | 6,100 | 3.4 | 3.3 |
| Educational & Health Services | 5,480 | 5,330 | 5,320 | 2.8 | 3.0 |
| Leisure & Hospitality | 7,270 | 6,530 | 7,070 | 11.3 | 2.8 |
| Other Services | 1,460 | 1,450 | 1,480 | 0.7 | -1.4 |
| Government Education | 3,820 | 3,830 | 3,750 | -0.3 | 1.9 |
| Government Administration | 5,070 | 5,050 | 5,090 | 0.4 | -0.4 |
| Government Tribes | 790 | 780 | 750 | 1.3 | 5.3 |

* Preliminary estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

tegrated Systems in Post Falls and the addition of more office and retail space at the Riverstone and Mill River development in Coeur d'Alene.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

BENEWAH COUNTY

- Plummer, a city of 1,000, recently received a \$320,000 Community Development Block Grant to help pay for a new fire station. The 9,500-square-foot, five-bay fire station will include a dispatch center, training rooms and a hose-drying tower.

- Linda Weinmann recently opened a bed-and-breakfast near Reid's Corner on Idaho 3 north of St. Maries. Josie's Cottage offers a spectacular view and access to docks on the St. Joe River.

BONNER COUNTY

- Until 1971, the Cedar Street Bridge took people from downtown Sandpoint across Sand Creek to the railroad station. Since the mid-1980s, the Cedar Street Bridge has been enclosed and served as a 28,400-square-foot retail center in downtown Sandpoint. First, there was a variety of stores. In 1988, local catalog company Coldwater Creek opened its first retail store in the bridge. By 1995, the Coldwater Creek retail operation took over the entire building. In May 2006, it moved to a 9,300-square-foot space downtown. Jeff Bond and John Gillham subsequently purchased the bridge and spent \$1.5 million to renovate it. Tenants are beginning to fill it up. Sixty-five percent of the space already has been leased, and Bond and Gillham currently are negotiating with three restaurants.

The new Cedar Street Bridge Public Market, entered through a 40-foot-high atrium on First Avenue, is home to these 10 shops: L'Atelier Silver Boutique, selling jewelry and silver products; Cedar Bridge Apparel, selling women's and men's clothing; Accessories with Attitudes, featuring clip-in hair extensions, jewelry, handbags, flip-flops, hats and leather goods; Just Clever; Sandy's Sugar Shack, a 50's style ice cream parlor; Deli and Dogs; Mamasans; Blue Lizard; Where the Wind Blows; and Deep Creek Crystals and Gems.

- AmericanWest Bancorporation recently broke ground on a 4,700-square-foot financial center in Sandpoint. The 33-year-old, Spokane-based bank, which has 36 branches in Washington and 10 in Idaho, opened its Sandpoint branch a year ago in a temporary location. The new full-service branch is expected to open by Thanksgiving.
- Craggy Range Bar & Grill will open in late July at the former site of the Power House Grill, which closed April 9. Located in the historic Old Power House Building overlooking Sand Creek and Lake Pend Oreille, the 5,000-square-foot space will encompass a 200-seat, full-service restaurant and a sports lounge serving pub-style food and offering many views of flat screen televisions. It will employ about 60 people. The restaurant is among 17 full-service restaurants in Sandpoint, resulting in this recurring joke in Spokane, Wash., an hour's drive

away, "Where are the best restaurants in Spokane?" Answer: "In Sandpoint."

- The Tomlinson Black realty offices in Sandpoint and Coeur d'Alene recently began doing business as Tomlinson Sotheby's International Realty. They now are two of the 400 offices worldwide affiliated with Sotheby's, the 260-year-old auction house famous for fine arts and antiques. Sotheby's formed its realty company in 1976 to augment its auction business. The Tomlinson offices remain independently owned but now tap into Sotheby's International Realty's network offering luxury homes and estates. The average Sotheby's buyer spends \$1.4 million on a home. In May, Tomlinson's Sandpoint office listed 55 properties in Bonner and Boundary counties for more than \$1 million each.
- Jill Burhlen recently opened Hey Cupcake in downtown Sandpoint, selling cupcakes, malts, milkshakes, ice cream sundaes and candy.
- Bonner General Hospital opened Performance Physical Therapy and Hand Center in the new Medical Village in Ponderay on May 29. The Sandpoint hospital runs two other off-site rehabilitation centers — Performance Therapy Services in Priest River and Performance Physical Therapy Sports and Orthopedics Center in Sandpoint. The newest clinic will offer full rehabilitation services, specializing in patients with orthopedic diagnoses and industrial injuries. Its location provides better access for residents in the northern and eastern ends of Bonner County. The county's rapid population growth and aging population have made it necessary for the hospital to expand its services. In addition, many western Montana residents come to the Sandpoint area for medical services.
- Healing Leaves Products, a company that develops and manufactures nutraceuticals, recently moved to Priest River. Rob McClintock, founder and formulator of Healing Leaves Products, began developing the products 17 year ago when he learned he had Multiple Sclerosis. Over time, he has developed 34 herbal and mineral nutritional supplements that promote overall health or target specific conditions including high cholesterol, high blood sugar, natural hormone replacement, colon health and liver support. Three people work at the Healing Leaves showroom and warehouse. The nutraceutical industry also provides jobs for 120 other county residents at Thorne Research in Dover.

BOUNDARY COUNTY

- The city of Bonners Ferry formally opens its new two-story visitor center in June. The International Gateway Visitor Center, funded jointly by the city and the Idaho Transportation Department, is located in downtown Bonners Ferry on U.S. Highway 95. Bonners Ferry Builders was the general contractor. The center's construction completes the major renovations to downtown Bonners Ferry that began four years ago, including the downtown revitalization project, the highway underpass for a pedestrian walkway connecting the Kootenai River Inn and Casino to downtown Bonners Ferry and the renovation and expansion of the inn and casino by the Kootenai Tribe. The 2,587-square-foot center includes rest rooms and a public meeting room as well as space where visitors can learn about local attractions and retail opportunities. The city will lease some space on the ground floor to the Selkirk International Loop, which promotes the 280-mile scenic route that circles from the Priest River and Sandpoint areas into Bonners Ferry up to southern British Columbia and then south through northeastern Washington back to Priest River.
- Gabby Goose Childcare and Pre-School, offering day care for up to 36 children, opened in early June on U.S. Highway 95 just south of Bonners Ferry.

KOOTENAI COUNTY

- Summer begins when Silverwood Theme Park in Athol unveils its newest attraction. The park — which began as an air show, a short train ride and a few Victorian-style buildings in 1988 — has added a wide variety of rides and attractions over the years including amazing rollercoasters, an ice-skating show, sections for the toddler set and a ride that includes a 140-foot drop. All have received rave reviews and brought new visitors. The biggest success of all was Boulder Beach, the water park it opened four years ago, turning the park from a one-day trip to a two-day trip. In early June, Silverwood unveiled its newest attractions, which doubled the size of the water park. They include a second wave pool, a little kids' play area with geysers and fountains, a bar serving beer and tropical drinks, waterfalls, Tarzan rope rides and a new family raft ride on what looks like a natural river. The raft ride can carry up to 1,200 people an hour. On peak weekends, Silverwood hosts 9,000 visitors a day.

- With granite and marble heavily featured in today's dream homes and with so many dream homes under construction in Kootenai County, it's not surprising that a Missoula-based company would decide to open a Montana Stone Gallery store. The store in Post Falls offers hundreds of types of stone for countertops, bathroom surfaces, flooring, conference tables and building facades.
- One of the fastest growing restaurant chains in the West recently opened at the Riverstone Regal Cinema Complex in Coeur d'Alene. Pizza Schmizza offers hand-tossed pizza with fresh ingredients, salads, pasta and breadsticks. The Riverstone pizzeria can seat up to 45 people.
- The 66,000-square-foot Sportsman's Warehouse in Coeur d'Alene celebrated its grand opening on May 17. The Utah-based firm sells camping, fishing, hunting and other outdoor equipment and clothing. The Coeur d'Alene store employs 80.
- Farragut State Park recently opened a new \$1.2 million campground. In recent years, Farragut, known for its breath-taking views of Lake Pend Oreille, has often had to turn away campers because of a lack of space. The new Gilmore Campground adds 38 individual and five companion sites, bringing the park's total camping spaces to 246. The campground was designed with RVs in mind using \$1 million from an Idaho Recreational Vehicle Grant, funded by RV registration fees. The 4,000-acre park is located on the site where the U.S. Navy trained more than 300,000 recruits during World War II. From its opening in September 1942 until August 1945, Farragut was home to more than 40,000 people, making it Idaho's largest city. After the war, the Navy kept a small part of the land near Bayview as the David W. Taylor research center, where the Navy and its contractors use Idaho's deepest lake to test submarines. In 1964, the state purchased the rest of the land and converted it to Farragut State Park. Its campgrounds are open from mid-March through the end of October.
- A 7,200-square-foot, \$1.2 million expansion is under way at the Hayden Branch Library. Shawn Cole Construction is the general contractor. The library — a branch of the Kootenai-Shoshone Area Library District that serves Athol, Harrison, Pinehurst, Rathdrum and Spirit Lake — will increase its total space 55 percent when finished in November — allowing it to triple the children's area, add a large

meeting room and two study rooms and create space for 40 computers. With the Internet becoming an increasingly important source of information, customers have wanted the computer area expanded. The Hayden library serves the northern part of the Coeur d'Alene School District, the part that has experienced rapid growth in school-age children while other areas have seen some declines. So, it's not surprising that it plans to increase space and services for children.

- Hayden Business Partners LLC is developing a \$6 million business condominium project near the Coeur d'Alene Airport. Aero Business Park will contain 32 units built in four phases. The first eight are completed, and the second phase is under construction. Each comes with an 800-square-foot office area, high-speed Internet access and overhead garage door. The units vary in size from 2,000 to 4,600 square feet. By purchasing the units as condos, small businesses can become owners without having to absorb the increased land and maintenance costs of a stand-alone building.
- With condominium towers rising throughout downtown Coeur d'Alene, the growing population is demanding its own grocery store. So Moose Market soon will open in a 3,500-square-foot store, featuring gourmet foods, a deli counter and a wide selection of beers and wines.
- Japan House Restaurant in Coeur d'Alene provides an upscale dining experience. Joshua Smookler, a New York chef, prepares French food with Japanese ingredients. Half of the 24 seats in the restaurant will be at a bar where sake, wine, beer and tapas are served.
- The North Idaho Manufacturers Consortium has been working with Idaho Commerce & Labor, the area chambers of commerce, North Idaho College and the Coeur d'Alene, Lakeland and Post Fall school districts to create more training opportunities for manufacturing and related trades, encourage more young people to pursue these jobs and develop a quality work force for the region's manufacturers. This fall, \$45,000 in new scholarships will help local students choosing professional-technical programs at North Idaho College. The North Idaho Manufacturers Consortium, North Idaho College Foundation and Idaho Commerce & Labor have pledged \$15,000 each for the Trades

and Industry Scholarship Fund. An endowment is being established to provide scholarships year after year. Scholarships go to students entering programs in automotive technology, carpentry, carpentry management technology, collision repair technology, diesel technology, drafting and design technology, heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration, landscape technology, machine technology, maintenance mechanic/millwright, outdoor power/recreational vehicle technology, welding technology and apprenticeships in electrical, plumbing, sheet metal and HVAC.

- Mangia Restaurant recently opened in the former Breakfast Nook in Post Falls. The Italian restaurant serves breakfast, lunch and dinner and wine and beer.

SHOSHONE COUNTY

- Joyce Holloren recently opened a store in uptown Kellogg selling jewelry and artwork by Northwest artists. Mine Jewelry – The Art of Glass Beading features bead-accented purses and scarves, stoneware pottery, paintings, sketches, photo art, wind chimes, necklaces and earrings. Kellogg has two major business districts – uptown on a hillside a few blocks south of Interstate 90 and downtown on flat ground a few blocks north of the freeway. Much of uptown is made up of brick edifices built in the early 20th Century. Located less than a half mile from Silver Mountain's gondola, uptown tends to contain more tourist-oriented businesses. Almost all uptown businesses sport alpine themes that were introduced when Silver Mountain Resort opened in 1990. Downtown is mostly made up of businesses built after 1960. These days, downtown is dominated by the parking lots and main showroom of Dave Smith Motors, the county's largest employer. About 400 people work for the Dave Smith auto dealership in Kellogg.

Kathryn Tacke, Regional Economist
 1221 W. Ironwood Drive, Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814
 (208) 769-1558 ext. 3984
 E-mail: kathryn.tacke@labor.idaho.gov